

# Letteratura artistica

Cross-cultural Studies in Art History Sources.

(Sposta in:...)

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[Count Heinrich von Brühl (1700-1763). A Saxon Patron in Europe]. Part One

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**Heinrich Graf von Brühl (1700-1763). Ein sächsischer Mäzen in Europa.  
[Count Heinrich von Brühl (1700-1763). A Saxon Patron in Europe].  
Edited by Ute C. Koch and Cristina Ruggero**

Conference organized by the State Art Collections (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen) in Dresden and Biblioteca Hertziana – Max-Planck-Institut for Art History in Rome Dresden, Sandstein Verlag, 2017, 547 pages.

**Review by Francesco Mazzaferro. Part One**



Fig. 1) Proceedings of the conference on "The Count Heinrich von Brühl (1700-1763). A Saxon patron in Europe", published in 2017.

Count Heinrich von Brühl (1700 -1763) was first Minister of Finance and then Prime Minister of the Principality of Saxony and Kingdom of Poland (which at the time also included Lithuania), the most trusted official by the kings August II and Augustus III, and a great patron of art, with very intense relationships with several figures in Italy and France. A double international conference was dedicated to his figure, as a politician and man of culture, collector and promoter of art; it was held in Dresden on March 13-14, 2014 and in Rome on March 20-21 of the same year. The conference was organized by the State Art Collections (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen) in Dresden and Biblioteca Hertziana – Max-Planck-Institut for Art History in Rome. The proceedings were published in 2017 in the original language of the speakers: in German, Italian, French and English.



Fig. 2) Louis de Silvestre, *Portrait of Count Heinrich von Brühl*, about 1730. The painting shows the honours of the Black Eagle, which the young von Brühl received from King Frederick William I of Prussia.

This was - historically – highly needed, in order to rehabilitate a figure who had been severely harmed (certainly to an excessive extent) by von Brühl's main political enemy, that Frederick II of Prussia who hated him so much that he let publish false pamphlets against his person and ordered Prussian troops marching on Saxony, during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), to systematically destroy all his properties, starting from the Belvedere, commissioned a few years earlier by the Saxon Count in the centre of Dresden, on the 'noble' bank of the Elbe, a true jewel of rococo art. When the war ended in 1763, Saxony was in pieces and no longer able to honour its financial commitments. Von Brühl was put under arrest by the house of Saxony, accused of having conducted an excessively luxurious style of life and having brought public finances to disaster. The Count died before the sentence of the trial concerning him; his posthumous acquittal then sounded like a trick of fate, and yet the court case did not exempt his heirs from the obligation to find an agreement with creditors to settle debts. Precisely the cards of this process provided historians with the documents allowing them to reconstruct with great accuracy his belongings, and in particular the works of art in his possession at the time of death.



Fig. 3) Jean-Joseph Balechou, *Portrait of Count von Brühl as Prime Minister*. Engraving reproducing a lost painting by Louis de Silvestre, 1750

Moreover, the proceedings of the conference allow us to discover von Brühl's key role, in the golden age of the House of Wettin, not only to ensure and maintain strong links between Saxony and Poland, but also to make Dresden, Leipzig and Warsaw centres of art and culture of the highest level, attracting for instance a large number of Italian artists and creating public and private art collections often thanks to purchases in Italy. Two cases are worth mentioning already now: in 1727 Augustus II the Strong bought around thirty statues from the Albani family in Rome; in 1745 (with a decision that had resonance throughout Europe) Augustus III acquired the Este collections in Modena. Von Brühl cultivated direct relations with Anton Raphael Mengs (1728-1779) and **Johann Joachim Winckelmann** (1717-1768) during their stays in Rome; he mandated Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764), **Luigi Crespi** (1708-1770) and Giovanni Lodovico Bianconi (1717-1781) to select potentially purchasable ancient or modern works of art in Italy. The assets were bought by the rulers of Saxony thanks to the financial policy of the Count, who made Saxony-Poland one of the wealthiest kingdoms in Europe precisely in a historical contingency, in which the Italian families were in a situation of great financial difficulty and urgently needed liquidity. Von Brühl did not hesitate to benefit from those conditions of financial precariousness of Italian rulers also to his own personal advantage, enriching his collections often at affordable prices. By virtue of a kind of law of retaliation, a few decades later, it was instead Saxony itself (and its former minister of finance and prime minister) that ended up in economic disarray. Von Brühl's collection of paintings was sold by his heirs to Catherine II of Russia to raise cash.



Fig. 4) The *Brühl's Terrace* in Dresden, in the current arrangement including late 19th-century buildings such as the Academy of Fine Arts (in the foreground).

The sizeable proceedings of the double conference included sections that dealt with the figure of the Count as a public man and collector, but also on art collecting in Saxony during the eighteenth century, on the cultural relations between Italy and Dresden and on European patronage of the time. Of all this I will speak in some detail in the two parts that make up this review. Only two words, instead, to mention the numerous architectural works built on behalf of von Brühl (for example, his palaces in Dresden and Warsaw), a topic only marginally in line with the main interest of this blog. Probably von Brühl would today be especially proud of the arrangement of the fortress on the Elbe transformed into a rococo building complex designed by Johann Christoph Knöffel, an architect inspired by French style: the Gallery, the Library, the Belvedere, the Brühl Palace and the Gardens. Even today we talk about the terrace on the noble bank of the Elbe as Brühl's Terrace, or *Brühlsche Terrasse*.

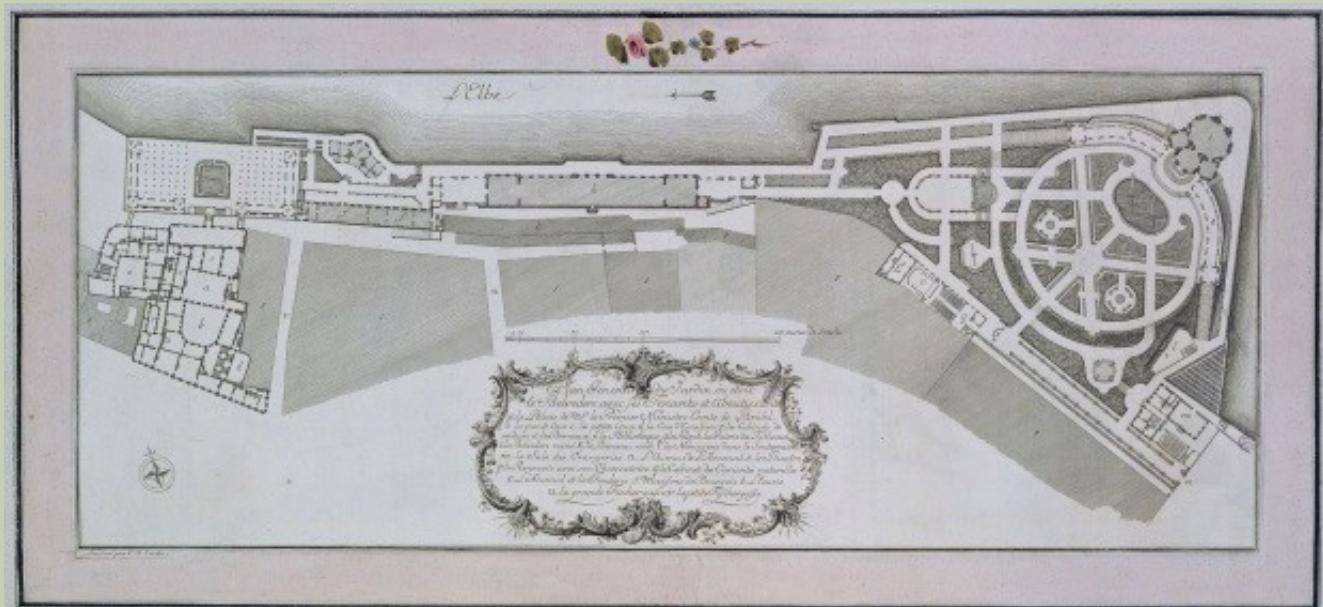


Fig. 5) Plan of the arrangement of the *Brühl Terrace* in 1761, after the destruction of the Belvedere in 1759.

Part of that complex (for example, as already mentioned, the Belvedere) was destroyed by

the Prussian troops during the attack on Dresden in 1759. The Brühl Palace, finalized in 1744, was instead destroyed in 1900 to make room for other public buildings. Von Brühl also let build the Brühl-Marcolini Palace in the suburbs of the city (also built by Johann Christoph Knöffel, it was transformed into a hospital in 1849 and partially bombed in 1945). He also let renovate two (still existing) castles outside the city, respectively in Nischwitz and Pförten. In Poland von Brühl let build the Brühl Palace in the center of Warsaw, and a country residence in Wola.

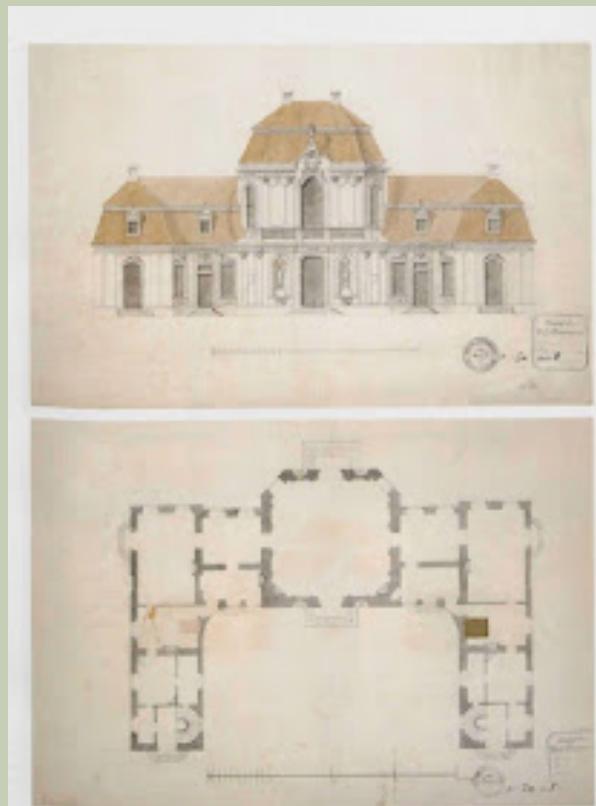


Fig. 6) Johann Christoph Knöffel, *Facade and plan of the Brühl-Marcolini Palace*, 1746.

Source: Barbara Bechter, *Der Brühlsche Garten in Dresden-Friedrichstadt*, in: *Die Gartenkunst*, 19 (2007), Nr. 1, pp. 1-46. See: [http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ardok/2415/1/Bechter\\_Der\\_Bruehlsche\\_Garten\\_in\\_Dresden\\_Friedrichstadt\\_2007.pdf](http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ardok/2415/1/Bechter_Der_Bruehlsche_Garten_in_Dresden_Friedrichstadt_2007.pdf)



Fig. 7) What remains of the entrance to the Brühl-Marcolini Palace in the suburbs of Dresden, integrated into the Friedrichstadt hospital.

## Von Brühl as a public figure

Jürgen Luh

Wie die Schrift Friedrich den Großen zu einem Gewinner und Heinrich von Brühl zu einem Verlierer der Geschichte machte

[How writing made a history's winner of Frederick the Great and a loser of Heinrich von Brühl]

The German historian Jürgen Luh (1963-) focused on the different way in which Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712-1786) and von Brühl used media for propaganda purposes [1]; two different approaches that (be clear: in addition to the fate of the Seven Years War) determined the success of the first and marked the oblivion (a true *damnatio memoriae*) of the second, so that both German historians and historical novelists like the Polish writer Józef Ignacy Kraszewski continued to speak badly about von Brühl for hundreds of years. Frederick made an active and conscious use of writing, while Heinrich, in essence, disregarded it. The Prussian ruler, for example, expressed grating judgments about von Brühl in his memoirs (*Historie de mon temps*, 1746), written when Frederick was only thirty years old; he also was the planner of what we would now call an authentic *fake news*, commissioning in 1760 to Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1717 -1771) a writing of pure defamation, falsely defined as a pamphlet escaped from (a in reality non-existent) fire. The text was titled "*La Vie Et Le Caractère De Mr. Le Comte De Brühl, Premier Ministre De Sa Majesté Le Roi De Pologne Et Électeur De Saxe: Pièce Échappé Du Feu*".



Fig. 8) Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, *La Vie Et Le Caractère De Mr. Le Comte De Bruhl, Premier Ministre De Sa Majesté Le Roi De Pologne Et Électeur De Saxe: Pièce Échappé Du Feu*, 1760

The Saxon Prime Minister, instead, never put his reasons in writing and limited himself, in 1761, to commissioning the engraver Michael Keyl (1722-1798) an album of etchings aimed at documenting the destruction of the Belvedere in Dresden by the Prussians. Although one of Keyl's engraving described Frederick II as an enemy of art and freedom, Jürgen Luh claimed that Frederick II was much more effective in guiding European public opinion than was the prime minister of Saxony-Poland.

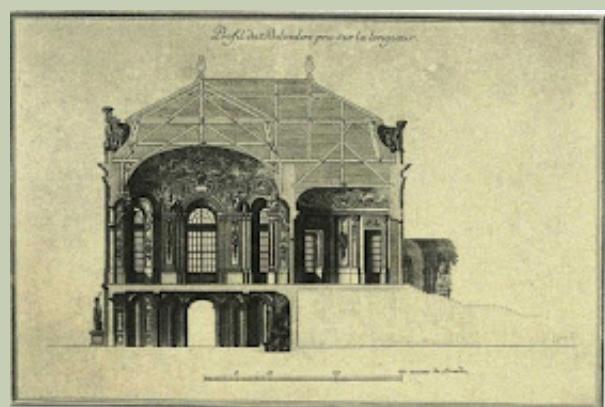


Fig. 9) Profile of the Belvedere built by Heinrich von Brühl on the bank of the Elbe in 1751 (and then destroyed

by the Prussians in 1759) in an etching by Michael Keyl, Dresden, 1761



Fig. 10) Michael Keyl, *Belvedere que S.E. Monseigneur le Premier Ministre Comte de Bruhl fit bâtir l'an 1751. Cet ornement de Dresde précieux modèle de l'architecture détruit de fond en comble par ordre de S.M. le Roi de Prusse l'an 1759*, Dresden, 1761. Source: <https://polona.pl/item/belvedere-que-se-monseigneur-le-premier-ministre-comte-de-bruhl-fit-batir-lan-1751,NTg1MjUwOQ/2/#item>

Frederick II's hatred for von Brühl, moreover, was probably fed by personal resentments: his father, Frederick William I of Prussia (1688-1740) always took great account of the young von Brühl, and very little of his son, who preferred to dabble in philosophy rather than prepare for reigning. It is certain that, at a certain point, von Brühl informed Frederick William I that his son intended to abandon the court and flee from Berlin. As a sign of gratitude, the monarch awarded him with one of the highest Prussian honours, never granted to a foreigner: the Order of the Black Eagle (the symbol of honours appears in the portrait of the Count painted by Louis de Silvestre of 1730 - cf. Fig. 2).



Fig. 11) Bernardo Bellotto, *The old Kreuzkirche in Dresden*, 1750



Fig. 12) Bernardo Bellotto, *The ruins of the old Kreuzkirche in Dresden*, 1765

## Frank Metasch

**Auf dem weg in den Bankrott.**

**Die sächsischen Staatsschulden unter Heinrich Graf von Brühl**

**[On the way to bankruptcy. Saxony's state debts under the Count Heinrich von Brühl]**

The German historian Frank Metasch examined some of the more general aspects of Saxony's financial history in the 1700s and tried to identify the origins of financial instability in Saxony under Count von Brühl [2]. Already at the beginning of the eighteenth century (when the Count was still only a child) the country needed substantial financial means to maintain the court and the army; a general taxation on consumption was introduced, which compressed the economy but failed to cover the budgetary needs. Saxony therefore had accounts in red for many years; to pay off debts, a state bank was created in 1698 and a lottery in 1713. Developments in Saxony, in fact, were perfectly in line with the general trend of the ruling houses in Germany and Europe: in those years, only Prussia was able to consolidate its own finances and enrich its assets. For some time even von Brühl

managed to stabilize the shaky Saxon finances. Those were years of professional success, so much so that the Count quickly passed from administrative to high managerial positions, until becoming in 1733 the equivalent of the general manager of the treasury, in 1738 the Finance minister and in 1746 the Prime minister. Until 1737 the accounts of Saxony were not completely disastrous, thanks to the centralization of the fiscal machine that allowed increasing taxes. It must be said, however, that there was no transparency: the level of indebtedness was not made public, and it was strongly linked to military commitments which were no object of public debate (think of the Saxon military operations in Poland, but also to participation in the Austrian campaigns against the Ottoman Empire). Nobody knew what the level of indebtedness of the rulers was (it was a well-kept secret; the debt was not structured in the form of public issuing bonds and the interest rates were negotiated bilaterally with the creditors). For this reason, when in 1763, at the end of the Seven Years War, the representatives of the Third Estate were for the first time informed of the disastrous financial situation, the indebtedness had already increased by 800% compared to the previous information dating back to 1749. Half of the tax revenue was used to pay only interests on the debt and the tax burden was such as to erode any hope for growth. It was only in 1763 (the year of the resignation and death of von Brühl) that drastic fiscal policy decisions were taken that brought the budget to balance.

## Von Brühl as a collector

Ute C. Koch

**Die Tapisserien im Besitz von Heinrich Graf von Brühl**

[The tapestries owned by the Count Heinrich von Brühl]

The large collections of tapestries, porcelains, paintings and books by von Brühl were the result of years of incessant purchases, but also of various gifts received from sovereigns.

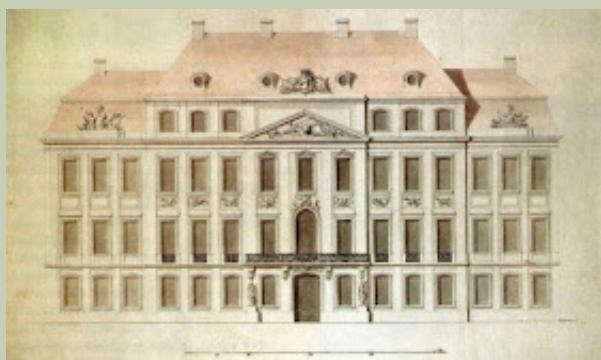


Fig. 13) Johann Christoph Knöffel, *Project for the Brühl Palace in Dresden*, 1744.

In his speech, the art historian Ute C. Koch examined the Count's French tapestry collection [3]. Today, it is known that von Brühl kept in his palace in Dresden, at the time of his death, a series of twelve tapestries produced by the *Manufacture des Gobelins* in Paris, and more precisely by Michel Audran (1701-1771) and Mathieu Monmerqué (no

birth date -1749). The tapestries reproduced the now lost series of the *Months of Luke* (originally created by an anonymous Flemish master of 1500 and, at the time, attributed by mistake to Lucas van Leyden). The series was sent by France to von Brühl as a wedding present; the incredible thing is that, however, it was not about his marriage, but about one that concerned the house of Saxony and the Bourbons of France in 1746 (celebrated sumptuously at the Brühl-Marcolini Palace). The circumstance explains however in what estimate the prime minister was held in the courts of all Europe. Von Brühl was able to return the gift the following year (in 1747), sending a service of 1200 pieces in porcelain to the French foreign minister. As part of the settlement following the trial in 1763, the heirs of von Brühl then alienated the ownership of tapestries to the house of Saxony. Most of the tapestries were lost during the Second World War, except for April (today at the Louvre), August (at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow) and November (at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg). In addition to the series of months, the von Brühl collection of tapestries also included works by the Flemish Philippe Behagle (1641-1705): seven pieces on the *Conquests of Louis XIV* and the *Glorification of Louis XIV*, produced in Beauvais and Tournai. In the castle of Pförten, until before the Second World War, there were also numerous tapestries representing landscapes, produced in Aubisson.

### Reino Liefkes

#### **The Triumph of Amphitrite: The Resurrection of Count Brühl's Lost Table Fountain at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London**



Fig. 14) The Meissen ceramic reproducing the *Triumph of Amphitrite*, a sculpture group by Lorenzo Mattielli. The ceramic was the work of Johann Joachim Kändler together with Johann Gottlieb Ehder, Johann Friedrich Eberlein and Peter Reinicke. Source: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1318531/the-triumph-of-amphitrite-fountain-kandler-johann-joachim/>



Fig. 15) Zacharias Longuelune and Lorenzo Mattielli, *The Triumph of Amphitrite*, Park of the Palazzo Brühl-Marcolini, 1744-1746. Photomontage of 2006 without the modern hospital in the background. Source: Barbara Bechter, *Der Brühlsche Garten in Dresden-Friedrichstadt*, in: *Die Gartenkunst*, 19 (2007), Nr. 1, pp. 1-46. See: [http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ardok/2415/1/Bechter\\_Der\\_Bruehlsche\\_Garten\\_in\\_Dresden\\_Friedrichstadt\\_2007.pdf](http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ardok/2415/1/Bechter_Der_Bruehlsche_Garten_in_Dresden_Friedrichstadt_2007.pdf)

The English scholar Reino Liefkes, of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, dedicated his contribution to a group of porcelain figures, made in 1745 by Johann Joachim Kändler (1706-1775) and other creators at the request of von Brühl. The series is now on display at the Victoria and Albert in London [4]. The figures are a scale model of the fountain that the prime minister of Saxony and Poland commissioned to the French architect Zacharias Longuelune (1669-1748) and the Italian sculptor Lorenzo Mattielli (1687-1748) in 1744-1746 for the park of his Brühl-Marcoloni Palace in the suburbs of Dresden. The table version of the fountain, in porcelain, was used as an ornament in gala dinners.

**Claudia Bodinek**

**Ein Tafelservice für den Grafen. Das Brühlsche Allerlei reviewed**

**[A tableware for the Count. Brühlsche Allerlei reviewed]**



Fig. 16) A piece of the *Brühlsches Allerlei*, 1745

The German art historian Claudia Bodinek dedicated an article to von Brühl's ceramic collection, which reached up to 2500 pieces [5] (Brühl owned, among others, a famous tableware called *Brühlsches Allerlei*: 'Allerlei' means a highly diversified tableware including at least one version of any existing type of ceramic). The dimensions of the

Count's collection are explained by the fact that he had been appointed co-director first (1733) and then sole director (1739) of the porcelain factory in Meissen, at that time an economic reality of primary importance at European level. By fulfilling that function, von Brühl, as early as 1733, was authorized to supply himself directly at the factory for his needs, without any payment. Do not think that these were marginal needs: it is believed that the requests of the royal household and the prime minister at certain times absorbed one third of Meissen's production. It should also be said that part of the Count's needs were determined by the protocol necessity to make gifts of a diplomatic nature (remember the above-mentioned episode of the 1747 present to the French Foreign Minister).

### Martin Schuster

**«die Galerie ist Ihr Werk, und ich habe davon die Ehre, Sie jedoch den Ruhm...».  
Carl Heinrich von Heineken und die Publikation der Gemäldegalerie von Heinrich von Brühl**

**[«The Gallery is your work, and I have the honour, and you the fame...».  
Carl Heinrich von Heineken and the publication of the gallery of paintings of Heinrich von Brühl]**



Fig. 17) Pierre-Étienne Moitte after Frans Mieris, *Broken egg*, 1754 ca. and the original by Frans Mieris (second half of the XVII century), today at the Hermitage



Fig. 18) Pierre François Tardieu after Peter Paul Rubens, *Perseus and Andromeda*, 1754, ca., and the original of 1620-1625, today at the Hermitage

The collection of over six-hundred paintings belonging to von Brühl was instead the subject of the contribution of the Dresden art historian Martin Schuster [6]. The only tool to reconstruct it at least partially, in the absence of a catalogue, was - for Schuster - the *Recueil d'estampes gravées d'après les tableaux de la galerie de S. E. M. le Comte de Brühl*, whose first volume was published in 1754, with an indication of only fifty, highly selected works (the precise list is reproduced in the appendix of the volume [7]). The

collection of prints (whose model was obviously the *Recueil Crozat* by Pierre-Jean Mariette) was printed in two hundred copies; the images had been reproduced by twenty-one (especially French) different engravers, chosen for this purpose through a kind of competition. In the immediately preceding and following years, two albums of prints with the paintings contained in the collection of Augustus III of Saxony were also brought out: the coordination of the two projects (the one for the royal gallery and the one for the private collection of von Brühl) was entrusted to the same scholar: Carl Heinrich von Heineken (1707-1791). The main problem, in the case of the von Brühl collection, was that it was conceived in two volumes and in any case not with the aim of providing a comprehensive view of the collection, but with anthological criteria, according to the taste criteria of the period. The second volume of the collection never came out: its publication was prevented by the war with Prussia first, and the alienation of the works to Catherine II of Russia in 1768 by the heirs of the count (the Hermitage web page allows us to identify the pictures according to their origin: at the address <https://www.arthermitage.org/Collection-of-Count-von-Bruhl-Dresden.html> you can see 74 works inventoried in 1769 as coming from the Brühl collection). Based on the discovery of the copper plates made for the engravings, Schuster was able to reconstruct a set of thirty-five works that were ready to be included in the second volume of the *Recueil* (including also paintings by **Paolo Veronese**, Nicolas Poussin, Bernardo Bellotto, Hans Holbein). Also in this case, the complete list was proposed in the appendix [8].



Fig. 19) Johann Christoph Teucher after Giuseppe Maria Crespi, *The death of Saint Joseph*, 1754 ca., and the original of 1712, today at the Hermitage

How did von Heineken select the fifty works included in the first volume? In the introduction to the first part of the *Recueil*, he explained that he had carefully chosen the best artists, also making sure to represent the various geographic schools. He added, moreover, that most of the works came from France and Flanders, albeit also with a significant Italian presence. As for the Flemish painters, von Brühl possessed works by Rembrandt, David Teniers the Younger, Jacob Isaaksz, van Ruisdael, Philips Wouwerman, Ferdinand Bol, Frans Mieris, Gerrit Dou and Peter Paul Rubens (the last with seven paintings). France was present with paintings by Valentin de Boulogne, Antoine Watteau and Nicolas Lancret. As for the Italians, von Brühl had in his collection works by Paris Bordone, Annibale Carracci, Johann Carl Loth (a Munich-based painter, but active in Venice), Francesco Trevisani, Luca Giordano and Giuseppe Maria Crespi (as well as

others erroneously attributed in those days to Correggio and Caravaggio). The Spaniards were represented by Jusepe de Ribeira.



Fig. 20) François Basan after David Teniers the Younger, *The old storyteller*, c. 1745, and the original of about 1640, today at the Hermitage.



Fig. 21) Carl Ludwig Wüst after Antoine Watteau, *Holy Family*, 1754 ca., and the original of 1719, today at the Hermitage.

Von Brühl's *Recueil* gave a tangible measure of the importance that 'contemporary' art of Northern Europe played in the context of the collection (in reverse, the *Recueil* of prints taken from the collection of Augustus III was entirely focused on Italians). Finally, Schuster dwelled on one of the very few pictures of the collection still held in Dresden today: it is one of the many versions of the *Judgment of Paris* that Rubens painted. Von Heineken commented the work with these words: "The judgment of Paris. Another painting by Rubens, oil on canvas, 23 inches long and 18 inches tall, engraved by P.F. Tardieu, carved on copper by P.E. Moette. This painting, which had already been engraved by A. Sommelin, is very famous and copies are seen everywhere. There is no doubt that the painting preserved in the gallery of Prime Minister Brühl (the copper engraving shown here and which comes from the Rubens legacy) is an original. Just look at it to overcome any doubt; and it is no exaggeration to say that it is the most beautiful work that Rubens' brush has ever produced. Men who are lacking in taste argue that the painter represented in the three goddesses his three wives, but they are mistaken, since Rubens had only two wives. The first was Catharine Brintes of Antwerp, who died after four years of marriage; the second was Helene Fourment, known for its beauty and its spirit. He painted her many

times, and it is very possible that she was her model for her feminine forms, perhaps even for the image of Venus in this picture" [9].



Fig. 22) Pierre François Tardieu and Pierre-Étienne Moitte after Peter Paul Rubens, *The judgment of Paris* ca. 1754, and the original of 1636, today at the Dresden Art Gallery

### **Maria Lieber, Josephine Klingebeil-Schieke**

**Kulturtransfer e provenienze: la biblioteca privata di Heinrich von Brühl nel contesto della cultura di corte sassone**

**[Cultural transfer and origins: Heinrich von Brühl's private library in the framework of the culture of the Saxon court]**

In an article in Italian, Maria Lieber (professor of Italian literature in Dresden) and Josephine Klingebeil-Schieke (her assistant) presented an in-depth study on the library of Count von Brühl [10], composed of 70 thousand volumes (8,000 of which went lost during the Seven Years War). After the death of the Prime Minister, the library was acquired by the house of Saxony. The two authors emphasized the importance of the collection for von Brühl's public image: he decided to create a book collection of this size especially to overshadow that of another political personality of the time, Count Heinrich von Bünau (1697-1762), who owned a library of 42 thousand volumes. The decision to create a mammoth library (whose volumes were open to the public) was so convinced that, in order to house it, von Brühl built a new rococo building on the bank of the Elbe in 1747, designed by architect Johann Christoph Knöffel (it was part of the already mentioned complex of the so-called von Brühl's *Terrace*). It is another of the many buildings built by von Brühl that was destroyed in Dresden (in 1897), demonstrating the oblivion in which the work of the prime minister had fallen over time. In a famous painting of the period, by Bellotto, the library was clearly recognizable: it was the long white building along the left of the canvas, under the dome of the *Frauenkirche*.



Fig. 23) Bernardo Bellotto, *View of Dresden with the Frauenkirche*, 1747

Let it be clear: aiming at beating the rival Bünau in terms of numbers, the Prime Minister focused primarily on quantity: he bought large quantities of volumes not only in Dresden, but also in Paris. *"The wealth of Brühl allowed him to acquire expensive luxury works, parchment prints, large specimens, exemplaires réglés and manuscripts of considerable value. It was his ambition to create a universal library, but with great emphasis on works on the fine arts and sciences. The section of mathematics and physics was considered particularly complete by the librarians of the prince elector; compared to this, the section dedicated to Italian, Spanish, English and French literature was at the same level. The collection of ancient theatrical performances, collections of poems and novels in French was considered unique in Germany. For the acquisition of the library [by the house of Saxony] the individual partitions were scrupulously examined and therefore there are very precise figures, which attest to the relatively large, homogeneous and coherent entity of the collection"* [11].



Fig. 24) Johann Jacob Haid, *Portrait of Heinrich von Büna*, 1745

The anxiety to accumulate books simply in order to excel led historically to negative judgments on the library, highlighting the purely exterior nature of the interest of the Count for culture, as well as a few major technical shortcomings (like the hasty and superficial catalogues). Ms Lieber and Klingebiel-Schieke did not align themselves with this type of

criticism: "The added value of Brühl's universal library was on one hand the presence of a large corpus «on the subjects of the history of foreign states and fine arts and sciences», on the other hand, the rarity of manuscripts, incunabula and ancient prints. Of the 270 Italian manuscripts so far found in the public libraries of Saxony, it has been proven that as many as 75 come from Brühl's library" [12].

## The collecting world in Saxony

Jenny Brückner

**«Ein vornehmer Herr hat ein Kabinett...». Dresden Sammler im 18. Jahrhundert**  
**[«A distinguished gentleman must have a cabinet...». Dresden collectors in XVIII century]**

As the German historian Jenny Brückner emphasized in her contribution, the world of collecting in Dresden in the eighteenth century was not limited to the initiatives of the king and the prime minister [13], but concerned many other subjects, being expression of a widespread attitude. Having a collection (of whatever kind it was) was a socially shared behaviour. In those years, for example, natural sciences studies underwent enormous acceleration precisely because of the social sharing of the systematic and encyclopaedic criteria of the culture that promoted them.



Fig. 25) Anton Graff, *Portrait of Philipp Daniel Lippert*, 1774

Among the many collectors mentioned in the essay, it seems useful to refer briefly to Philipp Daniel Lippert (1702-1785) and to **Giovanni Battista Casanova** (1730-1795), for the

relations they had with the art world. Lippert was first designer in the world of ceramics, then a court painter from 1739, and finally a professor of antiquities at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts starting in 1764. He collected and classified gems and maintained frequent and stable relations with Winckelmann and Mengs.

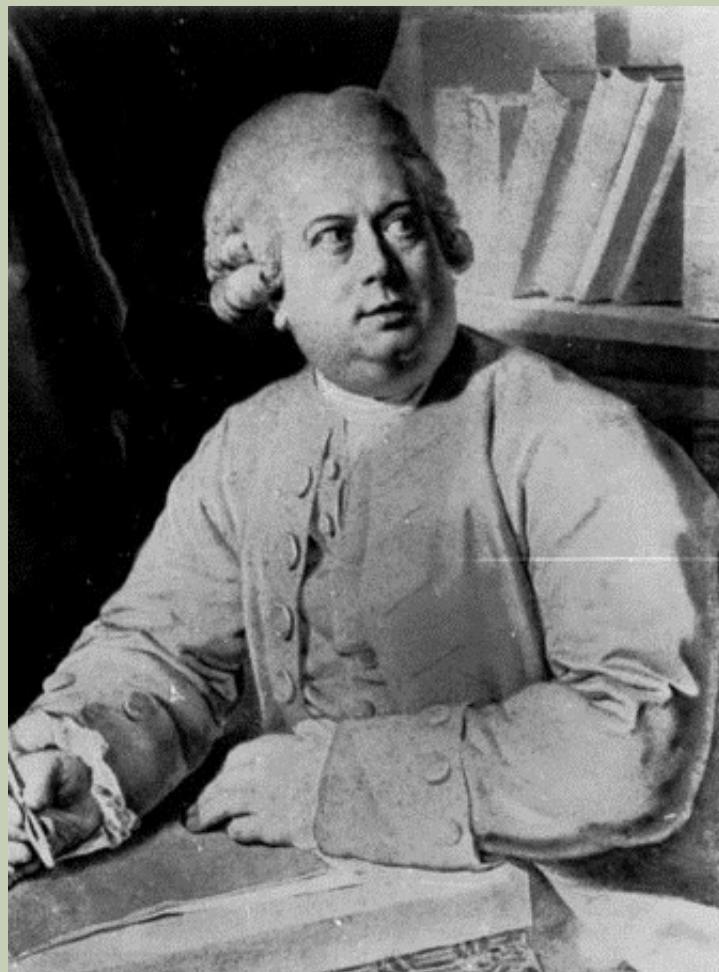


Fig. 26) Crescentius Josephus Johannes Seydelmann, *Portrait of Giovanni Battista Casanova*, before 1795.

Giovanni Battista Casanova (1730-1795), brother of the most famous Giacomo and also (like Lippert) a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden, collected everything. In his collections were preserved 1800 drawings and prints, which he used for his lessons. He was also a connoisseur of gems (he was appointed expert to assess the value of Count Heinrich von Brühl's collection of gems after his death) and had a series of cameos, which he sold to Catherine II of Russia in 1792 (they are now kept at the Hermitage). Casanova was also a commercial agent for the Russian envoy in Dresden, Count Andrey Mikhaylovich Belosselsky (Андрей Михайлович Белосельский) (1735-1776) and therefore he acted as intermediary for the sale of von Brühl's collection to Catherine II in 1768.

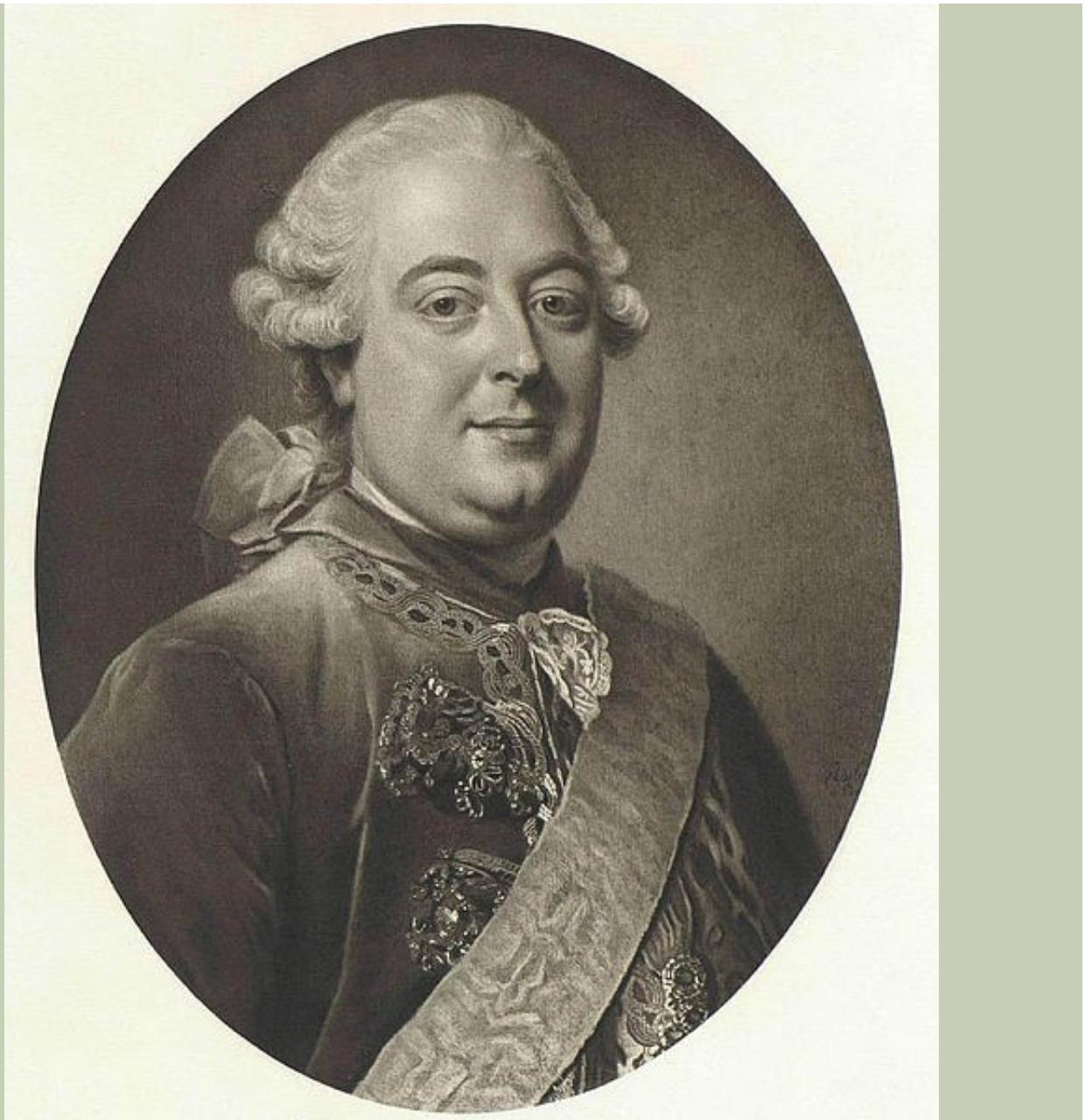


Fig. 27) Alexander Roslin, *Portrait of Andrey Mikhaylovich Belosselsky*, 1762

### Eva Manikowska

#### **Tra Venezia e Dresda. Il gabinetto di quadri di Bernardo Bellotto nella Salzgasse** [Between Venice and Dresden. Bernardo Bellotto's cabinet of painting in the Salzgasse]

In her essay, Polish art historian Ewa Manikowska tried to shed light, using an unpublished document she traced at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius, on the cabinet of paintings owned by Bernardo Bellotto [14], in his home in Dresden, on the Salzgasse. Due to the outbreak of the Seven Years War, Bellotto was forced to flee precipitously to Vienna, leaving to his neighbours his properties already packed and ready for departure. Those goods were however destroyed by the Prussian troops in 1760. Two years later, Bellotto wrote a hand-written *Catalogo de danni ch'ho' avuto, io, Bernardo*

*Bellotto de Canaletto l'anno 1760* (Catalogue of the damages which I Bernardo Bellotto de Canaletto, suffered in the year 1760 - the autograph text is available in pdf at <http://elibrary.mab.lt/handle/1/6342>, upon registration in the catalogue of the Vilnius Academy of Sciences library). The document was, in fact, a complete description of all the assets in his flat in the Salzgasse, and for this reason witnessed "*the crossover of different cultural models - the Venetians and Saxons, of the court and bourgeois - born within the artistic world and dictated by the most prestigious collectors and connoisseurs. It shows Bellotto's acculturation and his ability to use a wide range of cultural conventions and languages*" [15]. Among the influences that are discovered by reading the inventory, the Parisian inspiration appears to be prevailing.

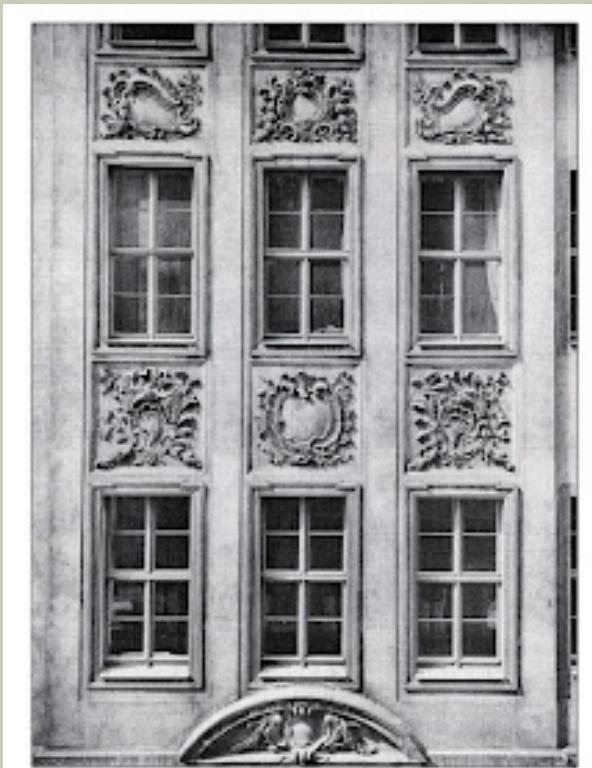


Fig. 28) Detail of the facade of the Cäsar- und Knöffelsches Haus, in a photo taken before the bombing of February 1945. Source: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%A4sar-\\_und\\_Kn%C3%BCffelsches\\_Haus](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%A4sar-_und_Kn%C3%BCffelsches_Haus)

At the time, Bellotto lived in a house of eleven rooms in the Cäsar- und Knöffelsches Haus, a residential complex built by the architect Johann Christoph Knöffel (already mentioned several times) in 1746 and severely damaged in 1760. The same building hosted the apartments of other important Italians (merchants, actors). It was a modern luxury flat, partly furnished according to the latest French aristocratic style, partly taking into account Venetian reminiscences (for example in the choice of mirrors). The aristocratic atmosphere was in line with the noble lifestyle of the artist according to the testimony of Heinrich von Heineken (we have already written several times about him) in his biography on the artist.



Fig. 29) Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki, *A painter's cabinet*, 1771

The house, moreover, had four rooms that served as a function of representation (library, cabinet of paintings, dining room and living room). The hand-written catalogue then referred to two entire Meissen porcelain tablewares, gifts that the Prime Minister von Bühl granted exclusively to members of the highest layers of society. The autograph listed 550 books for a total of 1,000 volumes (there were specimens of great value that the painter had certainly brought from Venice).

According to the unpublished document, the cabinet of Bellotto's paintings consisted of 59 canvases: the authoress acutely pointed out that, according to the description of Sebastiano Ricci and Antonio Pellegrini's houses, in Venice canvases were distributed in all the rooms of a house; here, instead, the Parisian taste led to gather the paintings in a single room, according to the Salon's logic, using every square centimetre of available surface (see also the engraving above of the Prussian Chodowiecki). Bellotto gave us useful information on all paintings and statues that belonged to him. The founding nucleuses of the cabinet were three: the first consisted of 18 paintings by the painter himself; there were then a series of works by contemporary Venetian painters and paintings by ancient masters. The contemporary Venetian painters were **Giambattista Tiepolo**, Giambattista Pittoni, Francesco Fontebasso, Jacopo Amigoni and Gaspare Diziani, often present with sketches in oil on canvas that gave the idea of the works in real dimensions. Among the ancient masters he held Rubens, Van Dyck, Veronese and Bassano. The authoress took the opportunity to make a comparative analysis between the cabinet of Bellotto and the collection of paintings that Heinrich von Heineken was forced to sell at auction in 1757 (also due to the war). For this purpose, a printed catalogue was prepared, from which it turns out that von Heineken also loved Venetian art, but he did not even disdain the Flemings. It is likely that other artists of reference in Dresden, such as the court painter Louis de Silvestre (of clear French taste) and Giovanni Battista Casanova (who perhaps reflected a more classical-Roman influence) had their own private art cabinets in town.

**Sven Pabstmann**

**Rembrandt, Rubens, Permoser - Ruhm und Glanz barocker Kunstsammlungen in Leipzig. Anmerkungen zur Sammlungsgeschichte der Stadt Leipzig um 1700**  
[**Rembrandt, Rubens, Permoser - Fame and splendour of baroque art collection in Leipzig. Remarks on the history of collecting in the town of Leipzig around 1700**]



Fig. 30) Peter Paul Rubens, *The miracle of St. Walburga's ship*, around 1611

The phenomenon of collecting was not exclusive to Dresden. The German art historian Sven Pabstmann dealt with the case of Leipzig [16], economic capital of Saxony, and underlined how at least one hundred collectors lived in the city between the mid-sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries. As it has already been said, in most cases they were natural science scholars. Among the many art collectors referred to, I would like to mention the pharmacist Johann Heinrich Linck the Elder (1674-1734), for his relations with the Londoner Hans Sloane, and the merchant Johann Christoph Richter (1689-1751) who owned about 300 paintings, including works by Rubens, Rembrandt, van Dyck and Lucas Cranach. But the attention of Pabstmann was directed above all to Johann Christoph's younger brother, i.e. to the merchant Johann Zacharias Richter (1696-1764) and his 'Cabinet of painting' (*Malerey-Cabinett*), which also included the *Miracle of the ship of Santa Walburga* by Rubens. The sons of Johann Zacharias (Johann Thomas and Johann Friedrich) continued to nourish the collection, which reached up to 400 paintings, including works by Veronese, as well as several tens of thousands of copper engravings, and made it accessible to the public (attracting an audience of visitors from all over Germany). But they were the last generation to deal with art and the collection was dispersed in the Napoleonic era.

**Anna Oleńska**

***Magnificentia principis. Brühl Artistic Activities in Poland as a Means of Political Self.-Propaganda***



Fig. 31) Johann Friedrich Knöbel and Joachim Daniel von Jauch, Palace Brühl in Warsaw, 1754-1759. Picture of 1939

The artistic initiatives undertaken by Count von Brühl in Poland were laden with political significance. The contribution of the Polish art historian Anna Oleńska took care of this [17]. Von Brühl, in Poland (and Lithuania) was certainly not loved. This is also proven by the extraordinary fortune that here knew the fake pamphlet made to write by Frederick II, which we described at the beginning of this post. The artistic patronage of von Brühl was in reality a (not necessarily lucky) attempt to receive a new form of legitimization in Warsaw (where he had moved during the siege of Dresden by the Prussians). After his attempts to fake his genealogy and prove an ancient Polish origin of his family had led to public derision, and therefore in the impossibility to be accepted as a peer Polish national, von Brühl tried to gain the sympathy of the local nobility by accumulating art works in town.

### Olga Popova

#### **Andre Belosselsky as Art Agent of Catherine II in Dresden Seen Through His Correspondence With Alexander Golitsyn**

The events of Count von Brühl inevitably led scholars to also take care of the collecting of Tsarina Catherine II of Russia, who bought the collections from the Saxon Count. The historian of Russian art Olga Popova observed how Catherine II, between 1760 and 1780, had constantly (and often ruthlessly) used Russian nobles and international intermediaries to get hold of art collections [18]. Moreover, one of her main objectives was to expand and consolidate the Russian artistic heritage as much as possible. In this context, I would like to mention the figure of Dimitri Alekseyevich Golotsyn (Дмитрий Алексеевич Голицын) (1734-1803), Russian ambassador first in France then in Holland, and finally Russian vice-chancellor, very close to both the Tsarina and the French illuminists. It was thanks to his work (and to the friendship of men like Diderot) that Caterina acquired numerous

collections: those of Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, of the Belgian Count Cobenzl, of François Tronchin and of Crozat.



Fig. 32) Roars Fyodor Stepanovich, *Portrait of Alekseyevich Golotsyn*, ca. 1760.

The purchase of the private art collection of Prime Minister von Brühl in 1768 was a further step in this direction. Golotsyn's local mediator was Prince Andrey Mikhaylovich Belosselsky (first ambassador to London, then to Paris and finally to Dresden, between 1766 and 1771), already discussed here for his contacts with Giovanni Battista Casanova. Olga Popova examined the correspondence between Golotsyn and Belosselsky.

On his arrival in Dresden, Andrey Mikhaylovich first became interested in Lippert's collection of gems. Then he came into contact with Giovan Battista Casanova. The relationship between the two became very solid, to the point that Belosselsky, in 1771, accompanied Casanova to Italy, looking for works that could be acquired either for the imperial collections or for Golotsyn, in a personal capacity.

The correspondence documented many operations carried out over the years: one of these was, for example, the sale to Catherine II of four works by Giulio Carpioni in 1767. But the most important acquisition was precisely that of the paintings once belonging to Count von Brühl in 1768. On that occasion, the destiny of the graphic works remained suspended; a catalogue was prepared for their sale. Four letters are dedicated to the theme. Unfortunately, a gap in the correspondence prevents us from knowing the outcome of the negotiation.

**End of Part One**

**Go to Part Two**

## NOTES

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[7] *Heinrich Graf von Brühl (1700-1763)* (quoted), pp. 470-473.

[8] *Heinrich Graf von Brühl (1700-1763)* (quoted), pp. 470-473.

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